



MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH

TO: Field Operations Staff
FROM: Colonel Robert Griego
DATE: October 25, 2013
RE: Tagging Regulation & Requirements

With the seasons in full swing, we now have some real life punch and carcass tag cases to learn from. All officers are doing a fine job thus far and are to be commended. We do want officers to realize there is a new process to obtain the hunting license and the old "carcass tag" tagging requirements has changed. Any change causes confusion for our hunters and the "new" processes sometimes requires a learning curve, without exception this year's big change is what to do after the animal is reduced to possession.

There has always been a license or "tag" requirement after a big game animal or turkey is harvested. Now the hunter has to punch or black out immediately after the harvest. Then once they arrive at the vehicle, camp, or place of storage they must fill out the license with proper date and time of kill.

In previous years the license holder had to attach the carcass tag to the animal immediately upon arriving at a vehicle, camp, or a place of storage. This system is still basically in place, but the tag does not necessarily have to be "attached" you will now see the word "accompanied" as well. It now states that the properly marked license "shall be attached or accompany the carcass while the carcass is left unattended," does not necessarily have to be attached to the carcass. If a hunter pulls up to your roadblock with a properly punched and filled in license in his pocket and the deer is present all is well. The two items are accompanied.

The rule itself is now under manner and method whereas last few years it was within each species rule.

The articulation and justification for a failure to punch or attach a carcass tag really has not changed. The "what if's" are endless and simply all cannot be addressed. It would be a good practice to educate all hunters contacted in the field and educate them on the new requirement. Please be reasonable in the pursuit of this violation, try to approach with each situation with the "intent" of the individual in mind. Documentation via a warning ticket or a regular court citation depends on the totality of the circumstances observed in the field, for each encounter please weighed each separately. Please have a few nuggets of articulation on a citation for failure to "properly punch a license" etc.... A simple, "he did not do it right," as per the letter of the rule lacks substance.

We are working to bring technology on board to tighten this up in the future, but for now work with those that need an education. Those that we can show intent to exceed the bag, we will proceed to charge. Also remind our customers the need to perform a harvest report in a timely manner, as when technology has caught up we will potentially be asking them to perform exactly that within a specific time period. Also please continue to complete "10-98" checks on all persons that have successfully tagged out, or even more importantly those that you know were unsuccessful in harvesting an animal during their hunt (road blocks last day of the hunt).

Please be positive and know we are working toward improvements. This is currently what we have in place and we need to make the best of it in a positive light, to our customers. Positive recommendations for improvements are greatly appreciated; move them through the appropriate chain. The new regulation is attached below if needed, keep up the good work!

19.31.10.9 POSSESSION OR SALE OF PROTECTED SPECIES: It shall be unlawful to possess, sell, or offer for sale all or part of any protected species except as provided below:

F. Big game and turkey: For licensed hunters of any big game species or turkey, the licensee killing the animal shall immediately punch or completely fill in (black out) the area designated for the appropriate species on the license. Immediately upon arriving at a vehicle, camp or a place of storage, the licensee must permanently fill in the proper date and time of kill on their license.

(1) The properly punched or blacked-out license shall be attached or accompany the carcass while the carcass is left unattended in any vehicle, field, or while it is in camp or at a residence or other place of storage. The punched or blacked-out license may be removed from the carcass while the carcass is being removed from the field to a camp or vehicle. In situations where numerous trips are required to remove the carcass from the field, the punched or blacked-out license shall remain attached to that portion of the carcass left unattended in a camp or vehicle.

(2) Once removed from the field, the licensee must ensure the carcass or parts thereof are accompanied by a properly filled out and punched or blacked-out license or other license information as determined by the director.

(3) It shall be unlawful for any licensee to fail to properly punch or completely black out the area designated by appropriate species on the license immediately upon killing any big game species or turkey.

(4) It shall be unlawful for any licensee for any big game or turkey to fail to properly fill in the date and time of kill on their license as required by rule.

(5) It shall be unlawful to possess any big game species or turkey that are unaccompanied by a properly punched, blacked-out or filled out license or unaccompanied by the other license information as determined by the director.

(6) It shall be unlawful for any person to transport or possess the carcass of any big game animal or turkey without proof of sex until the carcass arrives at a residence, taxidermist, meat processing facility, place of final storage or if required, is inspected and documented or pelt tagged by a department official.

G. Seizure: Any conservation officer or other officer authorized to enforce game laws and regulations shall seize the carcass of any protected species that is possessed contrary to this section.

[19.31.10.9 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.10.9 NMAC, 4-1-2007; A, 2-14-2013]